

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PORT O 01858 162113Z

62

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-02 USIA-15

PRS-01 SP-02 PM-04 CG-00 DOTE-00 /042 W

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P R 162100Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9488

INFO USCOMSOLANT

CINCLANTFLT NORFOLK

CNO WASHDC

USDAO CARACAS

USDAO BRASILIA

UNCLAS PORT OF SPAIN 1858

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MARR, TD, US

SUBJECT: PRESS REACTION TO CANCELLATION OF UNITAS VISIT

REF: PORT OF SPAIN 1840

1. THE ABRUPT DECISION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO TO CANCEL THE VISIT BY SHIPS FROM THE UNITAS FLEET TO TRINIDAD AND TO FORBID ANY JOINT EXERCISES INVOLVING THE TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO COAST GUARD HAS BEEN TREATED POSITIVELY BY THE TRINIDAD PRESS AND BROADCAST MEDIA. AS WAS THE CASE IN PREVIOUS PRESS STORIES ON THE VISIT, THE MEDIA HAS CONCENTRATED ON THE QUESTION OF JOINT MANEUVERS OR "WAR GAMES" INVOLVING THE T&T COAST GUARD AND THE NAVIES OF THE U.S. AND SEVERAL LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES. THE PLANNED PORT CALL AND REFUELING OPERATION BY THE UNITAS FLEET HAS RECEIVED ONLY PERIPHERAL ATTENTION.

2. THE "TRINIDAD GUARDIAN" CARRIED A LENGTHY FRONT-PAGE STORY INCLUDING THE FULL TEXT OF THE CABINET STATEMENT UNDER THE HEADLINE "TRINIDAD OUT OF WAR GAMES". THE "GUARDIAN" ALSO COMMENTED FAVORABLY IN AN EDITORIAL ON UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 PORT O 01858 162113Z

THE FINAL DECISION BY THE CABINET BUT WONDERED WHY THE

MINISTRIES INVOLVED HAD "BUNGLED" THE ISSUE BY GRANTING PERMISSION IN THE FIRST PLACE. THE REVERSAL "BETRAYS AN

ADMINISTRATION IN DISARRAY" AND AN ABSENCE OF "POLITICAL SENSITIVITY" IN THE MINISTRY OF NATIONAL SECURITY, THE PAPER SAID.

3. THE "EXPRESS" CARRIED ONLY A BRIEF FACTUAL ACCOUNT OF THE CABINET DECISION ON THE BACK PAGE. IN A CONVERSATION LAST NIGHT WITH AN EMBASSY OFFICER, HOWEVER, "EXPRESS" EDITOR GEORGE JOHN EXPRESSED AGREEMENT WITH THE DECISION TO CANCEL THE VISIT, AND HIS DECISION WILL PROBABLY BE REFLECTED IN LATER EDITORIAL TREATMENT OF THE MATTER IN THE "EXPRESS".

4. THE TELEVISION EVENING NEWS PROGRAM COVERED THE CANCELLATION DECISION AT SOME LENGTH AS ITS LEAD ITEM BUT DID NOT COMMENT.

FAY

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NNN

Message Attributes

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